



PRESS RELEASE

Internal Revenue Service - Criminal Investigation *Chief Richard Weber*

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Contact: *CI-HQ-COMMUNICATIONSEDUCATION@ci.irs.gov
IRS – Criminal Investigation

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Louisiana Woman Indicted for Preparing False Tax Returns, Contempt of Court, Forging a Federal Judge's Signature and Bank Fraud Related to the BP Deepwater Horizon Oil Spill

A federal grand jury sitting in New Orleans, Louisiana, returned an indictment on May 6, which was unsealed today, against a LaPlace, Louisiana, woman charging her with 37 counts of aiding and assisting in the preparation of false tax returns, eight counts of contempt of court, one count of bank fraud and one count of forgery of a judge's signature, announced Acting Assistant Attorney General Caroline D. Ciraolo of the Department of Justice's Tax Division and U.S. Attorney Kenneth Allen Polite Jr. of the Eastern District of Louisiana.

According to the indictment, Shawanda Nevers aka Shawanda Hawkins and Shawanda Bryant, operated a tax return preparation business under several names and at various locations in the LaPlace area. It is alleged that between 2011 and 2016, Nevers filed 37 false tax returns for clients that claimed a variety of fraudulent losses and deductions, including false Schedule C businesses and false unreimbursed employee expenses. In September 2014, a federal judge permanently enjoined Nevers from preparing federal tax returns. Nevers is charged with contempt of court for violating that injunction by preparing eight federal income tax returns in 2015 and 2016.

Nevers also is charged with forging the signature of a federal bankruptcy judge on a false document purporting to be an order reinstating a bankruptcy petition and with bank fraud for submitting a fraudulent claim for losses supposedly caused by the BP Deepwater Horizon oil spill in 2010.

If convicted, Nevers faces a statutory maximum sentence of three years in prison for each count of aiding and assisting in the preparation of false tax returns, 30 years in prison for the bank fraud charge and five years in prison for the charge of forging the signature of a federal judge. There is no statutory maximum sentence for the contempt of court charges. She also faces substantial monetary penalties, supervised release and restitution.

An indictment merely alleges that crimes have been committed. Defendants are presumed innocent until proven guilty beyond a reasonable doubt.

Acting Assistant Attorney General Ciraolo and U.S. Attorney Polite commended special agents of Internal Revenue Service-Criminal Investigation, who investigated the case and Assistant U. S. Attorneys Hayden Brockett and Mimi Nguyen of the Eastern District of Louisiana, and Trial Attorney Grace Albinson of the Tax Division, who are prosecuting this case.

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